



## Two American Per-4-mers: The SVT Focus and SRT-4 Neon

**JUSTIN MCLEOD**  
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With the current trends, gas will keep on jumping and car enthusiasm will as well. So why not take a four cylinder engine and pull a little extra power of it? You'll get the gas mileage and the full throttle fun in one little package. Not that V8's are out- they never will be- but we all could use a fun daily driver or an econo-car that provides some fun when driving. So I went with the 2005 SRT-4 Neon and due to lack of a 2005 model, the 2004 SVT Focus.

Why were these two fours chosen? Well, they are both American-made inline fours. They both scream fuel economy and performance and they come with a sexier body style. And with the added styling and power, it's easy to pay a little more for something you won't tinker as much on.

The Focus is up for new changes in the coming year and there will definitely be refinements, but it might not be enough. Ford's little I4 is pushing almost 2,600 lbs of car with 170 base hp and 145 ft/lbs of torque. That's good for a little four, but it would be nice to see what happens when they change the old engine's two-valve cylinder heads with the new Ford concept of three-valves per cylinder. It would be even more impressive if they would go ahead and put a turbine on it too. Dodge's turbocharged four utilizes 230 base horses and 250 ft/lbs of torque to push almost 3,000 lbs around.

When it comes to interior, you won't find a lot to gripe about



top: Courtesy of fordvehicles.com / bottom: Courtesy of dodge.com

The Ford SVT Focus (top) and Dodge SRT-4 Neon (bottom) display both power and style.

on either car. There are paneling upgrades and a better steering wheel. The instrument panel is attractive enough, featuring extra gauges for boost (on the turbocharged SRT). Both come with suspension-sport buckets in the front and the Focus allows the backseat drivers full view with a theatre-styled seating concept that leaves the driver with a perfect view as well.

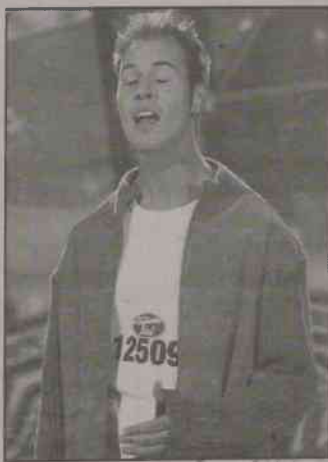
The Focus and Neon handled wonderfully as well. When you wind up the engines, the tires grab the road and you glide through turns with ease and a feeling that can't be rivaled by anything less than a true sports car. Yes, they have equally equipped suspension systems and brake setups, but if the Focus had had more horsepower, it would have stayed in the running.

Of course, both of these are grand buys filled with fun driving at economic gas consumption. But if you're willing to jump from about one grand for the added power you'll be missing in the Focus- you'll be happier in the long run.

**LINNIE SARAH HELPERN**  
LIFESTYLES EDITOR

In the ever-awesome world of rock and roll, there is nothing worse than being the guy who almost made it. The tale is as old as Pete Best himself; a young scrappy lad joins the band of a school chum and they rock out shamelessly until said scrappy lad decides to take another path. Neil McCormick was one such boy and his old school buddy was none other than... Bono. In his memoir, "Killing Bono" McCormick tells of his life post-U2, the trials and tribulations he faced, and what it is like to be Bono's less-successful alternate self.

*Some are born great. Some achieve greatness. Some have greatness thrust upon them. And some have the misfortune to go to school with Bono.* So summarizes the back cover of "Killing Bono." Neil McCormick, now the music critic (gasp!) for London's "Daily Telegraph," could have easily turned his tale into an attack on the man considered by many to be the messiah of rock music. And with good reason; Bono is living the life that McCormick convinced himself as a child that he was born to live. Yet, "Killing Bono" is so much more than that.



Courtesy of idolstox.com

Another year has passed and yet again lambs gather to throw themselves to the Idol wolves.

## Bono's days are numbered in a page-turning new memoir



Courtesy of u2.com

Bono waves to crowds alongside President Bush. In Neil McCormick's memoir, the U2 frontman is blamed for a life in semi-ruins.

While McCormick believed that he was destined for rock stardom, it seems far more likely that he ended up right where he was supposed to be. McCormick begins his book as a tale of what could have been, but ends up focusing on what was with more heart than any rock story written in the last five years. The dominant focus of "Killing Bono"

is not McCormick's stab at almost stardom or a bitter tirade against the man who would be king, but it is more about the music, man.

Neil McCormick experienced the Dublin punk scene first hand, both through the eyes of a musician and the eyes of a future rock journalist, and it shows. He approaches the subject of the music with both sensitivity and honor, and you can feel his passion for what he is writing. With that said it is his habit of complete and utter self-deprecation coupled with his innate ability to make the reader laugh out loud that make "Killing Bono" worth sitting down for.

Inevitably, "Killing Bono" is tale filled with heart, humor, and some kick-ass Bono stories. In the hands of any other writer, "Killing Bono" could easily have become a scathing tell-all about a rock legend. Yet, and perhaps most interesting, Neil McCormick and Bono are still good friends. McCormick simply believes that he and Bono perhaps traded lives at some ill-fated moment in history. And while McCormick may never get "his" life back, he is still the guy who sat next to Bono in home room. And that has to count for something, right?

## Another year, another batch of wannabe idols

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The talent-based reality television show "American Idol" began its fourth season Jan. 18 after more than 100,000 people in seven cities around the country auditioned to be a part of it. This year more people auditioned than ever before, proving that reality television shows are truly becoming a widespread phenomenon among Americans. Last year, "American Idol" was the most-searched item on both

AOL and Yahoo and received the People's Choice Award for the best reality show competition.

Yet, not everyone loves "American Idol." Two major criticisms of the show are the allegedly unfair voting for the contestants and the mockery of talent William Hung presents after receiving a recording contract. Hung became famous after his audition of a song and dance to Ricky Martin's "She Bangs."

Many complaints were lodged

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